Senate passes senior property tax deferral improvements

January 20, 2026 . 5:00 PM — 2 min read

The Senate on Jan. 8 passed Sen. Pat Jehlen's bill to expand eligibility for the Senior Tax Deferral program by raising the income limit, and by lowering eligibility to seven years of state residency. COURTESY PHOTO/OFFICE OF SEN. PAT JEHLEN

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Pat Jehlen:

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The Senate on Jan. 8 passed Sen. Pat Jehlen's bill, An act relative to senior property tax deferral, to expand eligibility for the Senior Tax Deferral program by raising the income limit, and by lowering eligibility to seven years of state residency.

The bill also gives a respectful amount of time to grieving families of people who have taken advantage of the Senior Tax Deferral, allowing heirs more time to pay the deferred taxes. It delays an increase in the interest rate for deferred taxes until a year after the taxpayer's death, and delays the date of potential foreclosure.

"Property tax deferral can help older adults stay in their homes," said Jehlen. "It allows older adult homeowners to defer all or part of their property tax bill, which is paid back to the municipality with interest when the property is sold. It can be a better alternative to reverse mortgages, especially if the municipality sets the interest rate lower than the 8 per cent cap. It is under-utilized, with fewer than 1000 people in the state using it. This legislation will remove barriers. But because it is a local option law, many cities and towns can do more to adopt it, lower interest rates, raise income limits, and especially to inform residents."

Jehlen singled out Winchester, where the Council on Aging first brought the program to her attention, and where 20 residents are deferring property taxes, more than the total in the three cities she represents.

She noted that all communities in her district have reduced interest rates below the maximum, and increased income limits above the minimum. Winchester has an income limit of $60,000 and a 4% interest rate.

Jen Benson, Massachusetts State Director at AARP said, "We know that property taxes can be burdensome for many older homeowners. We appreciate the Massachusetts Senate taking action to help mitigate

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financial pressures so our older residents can stay in their homes and communities and continue to age with dignity."

Rosa Bentley, president of Massachusetts Senior Action said, "Seniors across the Commonwealth have called for relief from rising property taxes that threaten their economic security and ability to age in their homes and communities. S.2901 addresses critical issues in the property tax deferral process that have prevented many from using this option. These changes will reduce barriers to this valuable program and meet a critical need in relief efforts. We look forward to further action to expand relief for those burdened and to enable revenue streams that support that expansion."

Senators approved the legislation 37-0. Having been passed by the Senate, the bill heads to the House for further consideration.

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‘Chicago: Teen Edition’ dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents “Chicago: Teen Edition,” a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. Set in the 1920s, this iconic production is sure to leave the audience wanting more. Performances will

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EVENTS

Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents ‘Syldason: You Are Welcome Here’

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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NEWS

Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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NEWS

Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

WILL DOWD | STAFF WRITER
March 4, 2026

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